

**MINUTES**  
**of the**  
**OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE ADVISORY GROUP (OHVAG)**  
**of**  
**ARIZONA STATE PARKS**  
**MEETING OF August 7, 2009**  
**Arizona State Parks Offices, 1300 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ**

**A. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Committee Members Present: Hank Rogers, Chair  
Rebecca Antle  
Bob Biegel  
Dave Moore  
Pete Pfeifer

Committee Members Absent: Drew John  
John Savino

Arizona State Parks (ASP) Staff: Dan Shein  
Amy Racki  
Doris Pulsifer  
Bob Baldwin  
Ruth Shulman

Other Individuals Present: Joe Sacco, Arizona Game & Fish Department (AGFD)  
Jeff Gursh, AZOHVC, ATR  
Mary Skordinsky, Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
Hassayampa Field Office (HFO) (via  
'phone)  
Sandee McCullen

**B. INTRODUCTION OF MEMBERS AND STAFF**

Members and Staff introduced themselves.

**C. ACTION ITEMS**

**1. Approval of Minutes from the May 15, 2009 Meeting**

Mr. Biegel moved to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2009 meeting. Mr. Pfeifer seconded the motion, which carried with no further comment.

**2. Consider Funding the FY2009 Recreational Trails Program (Motorized Portion) (RTPMP) Grant Applications**

At this point, Ms. Skordinsky joined the meeting.

Mr. Baldwin noted that for the FY2009 grant cycle, there is \$650,237 available for grant award. The program has a cap on grant awards of \$280,000; no applications exceeded the

cap. The summary of applications and recommended awards begins on p. 13 of the agenda packet.

The BLM HFO application scored 97 points and a summary of the scoring is available on p. 15. The project is to renovate designated trails in three Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) of the Hieroglyphics. Those areas are Table Mesa, the Boulders and Vulture. The project will include correcting damage from erosion, mitigating dust issues, closing unauthorized trails, and establishing a multi-use staging area in the Table Mesa area. Ms. Racki noted that Mr. Savino had comments on this project during the original presentation of the applications, however in his absence today, any current comments will not be heard.

Mr. Baldwin asked Ms. Skordinsky if she had comments or questions. Ms. Skordinsky said she was thrilled that the HFO had been approved for the grant and she would like to get some information on the grant administration. Mr. Baldwin advised her that administration information would come with the Participant Agreement (PA) once the ASP Board approves the grants. Once the PA is signed and executed, ASP will be able to reimburse when project bills are sent.

Chair Rogers asked which areas or trails would be closing. Mr. Gursh responded that closures would happen where there are several abandoned mines, along the "cherry stems" off other roads/trails. If it's possible, those areas will be restored. Mr. Biegel asked if there was a list of abandoned and closed mines available. Chair Rogers asked how many miles would be closed. Ms. Skordinsky said that information was not yet available; it depends on conditions on the ground. However, the number will be known by 2010. Mr. Baldwin noted that the project is only working on designated routes.

Chair Rogers then asked about the multi-use staging area. He would rather not see OHV funds expended on non-OHV projects. Mr. Gursh said that area is near the Black Canyon Trail at Little Pan, for non-motorized and equestrians. The BLM is paying for it, but it is not part of the grant. Ms. Skordinsky said that the BLM has received grants from equestrians and some of the BLM stimulus money. Multi-use areas can be one way to build good will amongst different types of users. Chair Rogers said that volunteer projects are another way to build good will. Mr. Gursh said that the maps that came with the application show which "cherry stems" will be closed. Some areas will be rerouted around State Trust Land, and provide connectivity. Chair Rogers asked about the mileage on the loop. Mr. Gursh said it would be approximately 87 miles according to projections. Ms. Skordinsky said that the areas to be closed would those that are the least safe.

Chair Rogers asked about the recent US 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that stopped road building on some public land – would that affect the BLM. Mr. Gursh replied that that ruling applies only to the US Forest Service (USFS). Ms. Antle asked if there would be a marker of some kind showing that this work was an ASP funded grant project. Mr. Gursh said that information would be on the kiosk(s). Chair Rogers asked how long this project would take to complete. Mr. Gursh said that the projected time is two years for completion.

Mr. Gursh went on to say this was the first “full-fledged” RTP grant application he had ever completed, and while the process was challenging, it was also made enjoyable by working with ASP Staff.

Mr. Baldwin continued with the BLM – Arizona Strip Field Office (ASFO) application. This application is for signage in the area. It scored 80 points, only because signage is considered a low priority. Mr. Pfeifer asked if this project was for kiosks and where they would be located. Mr. Baldwin replied that the signs would inform riders that the National Monument is a non-motorized area. He then distributed a plan showing what the kiosks may look like, and access information.

The next grant application was for the Town of Eagar, Saffel Canyon Trail renovations. The project deals with replacing or repairing bridges and cattle guards and improving drainage. Chair Rogers discussed what he knew about the projects, which will help protect a town water source, help areas where the trail suffers from erosion, and also provide adequate signage to distinguish this trail from a hiking trail ½ mile away that has a similar name.

Mr. Baldwin then noted that all three projects total to \$521,560 in grants. All projects must complete the Section 106 requirements and obtain the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA) concurrence.

Chair Rogers asked for a motion. Mr. Biegel moved that the Recreational Trails Program (Motorized Portion) funding be approved for the three (3) FY2009 applications at \$521,560 and that this recommendation be forwarded to the Arizona State Parks Board for final action. Mr. Pfeifer seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

Ms. Skordinsky left the meeting at this point.

### **3. Consider Recommending the Arizona Trails 2010 Plan**

Ms. Racki noted that the drafts of the Plan had gone through public comment, and reminded OHVAG that the priorities set in the Plan guide the criteria for the trails grants programs, both motorized and non-motorized. She also noted that lots of comments had been received, resulting in some minor adjustments to the recommendations. One important change was that establishing and designating route became a first-level priority. At this point, OHVAG is being asked to recommend the Plan to the ASP Board for approval and adoption. The Plan may be on the agenda of the September Board meeting.

Ms. Antle said that she found Chapter 5 very well done. However, she doesn't agree with the numbers in Chapter 3, which seem low to her. They don't match with the increase in vehicle purchases. Ms. Racki said that the sales of new ATVs and dirtbikes was new information provided by the industry. This figure does not include other OHV types or used OHVs. Mr. Moore asked about the differences listed in desire for law enforcement,

motorized (desires law enforcement) vs. non-motorized (does not feel law enforcement is necessary). Ms. Racki responded that the OHV community wants a law enforcement presence. The land management agencies do not have sufficient staff to devote a presence at their particular sites.

Mr. Pfeifer moved that the Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Group accept the *Arizona Trails 2010: A Statewide Motorized and Non-motorized Trails Plan* and that this recommendation be forwarded to the Arizona State Parks Board for final action. Mr. Biegel seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion.

#### **4. FY2009 Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Fund Projects and Programs**

Ms. Racki began by saying that Arizona State Parks is facing unprecedented times with no general fund monies to support Park operations. They are in a challenging position of using other funds, not originally intended for Parks operating expenses, to offset the \$0 general fund appropriation to State Parks, and keep the Parks barely afloat. These are sad days. We will likely see reductions in force and park closures. It is unknown at this time.

OHVAG members were provided with FY2009 revenues (excluding June 2009) and legislative sweeps. The OHV Recreation Fund revenues generated by the OHV Decal program, which began in January 2009, is over \$700,000 to date. From July 2008 to June 2009, more than \$1.5MIL OHV Recreation fund revenues were generated from the highway user revenue fund/gas tax monies. With the \$700,000 OHV Decal revenues this totals more than \$2.2MIL revenue for FY2009.

However, more than 1.6MIL was raided from the Arizona State Parks Board portion of the OHV Recreation Fund in FY2009, and an additional \$692,100 may be used for Arizona State Parks Board operating to offset general fund cuts. Although there were no FY2009 OHV Recreation funds available for site-specific projects, FY2006-2008 projects continue to be paid out. A list of open projects was provided to OHVAG.

Mr. Gursh did not know that OHV Decal funds were raided. Ms. Racki stated that there is no differentiation of OHV Decal verses OHV Gas Tax to the legislature – together the funds are entitled the OHV Recreation Fund. At the August 3, 2009 Parks Board meeting, the Board gave approval to allow the OHV Recreation Fund to generate for future year grant and agreement projects. However, \$400,000 has already been raided in FY2010.

Ms. Racki noted that the budget of AGFD did not suffer as deep cuts as ASP. Mr. Sacco said that they are able to act on the mandate to hire seven new law enforcement officers. Chair Rogers asked about the fine for an OHV violation citation. Mr. Sacco replied that the specific fine would be up to the court, but the recommended fine is usually 10 times the amount of the decal. According to Title 28 of the Arizona Revised Statutes, any money generated from fines go to the individual counties. Ms. Antle asked about the future of the decal revenue if it is not used for State Parks operating. Ms. Racki said that it will be used for future grants and agreements if it is not raided.

Moving on to OHV Ambassadors, Ms. Racki said that the BLM is stepping in to take care of operations until May 2010 (possibly December 2010). There is still a possibility that the training scheduled for October will still happen. The program is popular and successful. It may not expand for some time. However there is an agency manual available to help agencies take on the program at a more local level.

Ms. Racki continued that the new ASP Director had met directly with the Director for BLM in Arizona. Another development is that AGFD and ASP are working together to formulate and implement a shared program philosophy for the Arizona OHV program.

Mr. Sacco added that one purpose of this shared vision is to make sure that the messages are consistent across all education and enforcement. He went on to note that there had been nearly 500 applications for the seven law enforcement officer positions available. In those 500 applications were 48 from currently commissioned officers willing to accept a position with a maximum three-year term. At the moment, AGFD needs to purchase equipment and trucks for these new officers to start. The initial cost of the law enforcement program will be steep, but it is expected to level out in the future. Chair Rogers asked if violators would get a ticket or an initial warning. Mr. Sacco said that would be left to the officer's discretion, but most violators should expect a ticket. Mr. Sacco then went on to say that there will be a volunteer calendar online, partially to help with the community service portion of any sentence for violators, but also for education and as an to providing matching funds for grants in the form of volunteer labor. Further discussion of volunteers and the OHV Ambassador program followed.

Mr. Pfeifer asked if vehicle and equipment shops were providing support. Ms. Racki said that the greatest need at the moment is staff. Mr. Baldwin noted that \$50,000 dollars from the RTP Education Fund has been allocated to both the Ambassador Program and AGFD.

Chair Rogers asked when the new enforcement officers start. Mr. Sacco said that he had two applications from officers currently in AGFD Wildlife Management; they could start shortly since their training curve would be shorter. Otherwise, if the new hires need to attend the law enforcement academy, that will add time to the training necessary for the specialized OHV work. Officers hired in January would likely be in the field by July. Further discussion on shifting officers seasonally followed, as well as discussion on officer liaison with the community.

Mr. Pfeifer had a question about the membership and purpose of the ASP Board's OHV Ad Hoc Subcommittee. Ms. Racki noted that the Subcommittee itself has yet to meet, however Joe Sacco and Bob Biegel are both members. Their main role is to develop a funding process for the decal revenue, which process may take a while. Any process they develop will have to be approved by the Arizona Outdoor Recreation Coordinating Commission (AORCC) as well as the Board. The Subcommittee will most likely dissolve once its purpose has been fulfilled.

**5. Discuss OHV Legislation**

Discussed above.

**D. PRESENTATIONS**

None.

**E. REPORTS**

1. **Chair's Report** – Chair Rogers reported that efforts are underway for the annual Jamboree. The event takes place this year on September 8-12. Participation looks good and there are also many great volunteers.

2. **Staff Reports**

- a) **Update on ASP Board Actions**

See Item C4: FY2009 OHV Recreation Fund Projects and Programs.

- b) **Notification of OHVAG member openings**

Ms. Shulman said that recruitment season is underway, and there are two openings on OHVAG, both for representatives of user groups. Both Mr. John and Mr. Pfeifer have terms expiring this year. Mr. Pfeifer is eligible to reapply; Mr. John is not. OHVAG members are being asked to help in the recruitment drive by providing flyers to potential applicants. (Flyers provided at the meeting and via eMail.) The deadline for applications is September 25, 2009.

**G. CALL TO THE PUBLIC**

Ms. McCullen noted that NOHVCC had sent her a thank-you message that more properly belonged to Ms. Racki, who provided them with information on the OHV Ambassador program.

**H. SUMMARY OF CURRENT EVENTS, MATTERS OF BOARD  
PROCEDURE, REQUESTS AND ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS**

Mr. Shein will provide a link to a GAO report that indirectly referred to the OHV Ambassador program. For the next meeting: Mr. Baldwin noted that Bill Gibson of the BLM would like to present a report on a statewide project involving interagency cooperation. The BLM will also lead the field trip ride. Mr. Gursh would like to make a presentation on the Central Arizona Trails Association.

**I. TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING**

November 6-7, 2009, Safford, 1:00pm.

**J. ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Pfeifer moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Biegel seconded the motion, which carried with no further discussion. The meeting adjourned at 3:05pm.